

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2020

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Office of the Governor
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We appreciate this opportunity to contact you directly to urge your immediate attention to the need for the establishment of a state-sponsored COVID-19 testing site in the portion of the Southern Tier region we represent.

As you are well aware, over the past few weeks our county health departments in Chemung and Steuben counties have noted and continue to raise serious concerns over rising clusters of COVID-19, which are particularly alarming among those associated with the Lighthouse Baptist Church in Horseheads and at the Corning Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing.

In addition to the urgency over containing the spread within a specific location or facility, we believe it's imperative that we take every available step to focus on the prevention of any further or potential community spread.

We have welcomed and appreciated the assistance of the state Department of Health to facilitate several days of free testing for area residents at sites in Chemung and Steuben counties, however we request the establishment of a more long-term response.

Specifically, we would like to request the placement, for at least 30 days, of a state-sponsored, centrally located, drive-thru testing site in the region to provide a much broader segment of our population with the ability to conveniently access the free and convenient testing that only a state-sponsored site can offer.

A state-sponsored site is warranted, in our view, to help address the short-term spike in positive cases COVID-19 we are currently experiencing, but also, in the long-term, to afford our residents the fullest opportunity take every appropriate and important step to best protect our communities at large. This site would, as well, better accommodate your newly established guidelines for the visitation of loved ones in nursing homes, which remains an especially troubling obstacle for the families of residents.

While state-sponsored sites have been established in Binghamton and Rochester, it is simply not practical for many of our constituents to travel these distances.

Additionally, Southern Tier counties are extremely interested in exploring the possibility of a state-sponsored mobile lab to give even more residents throughout the region the opportunity to access regularly scheduled, weekly events as close to home as possible.

We are prepared to further discuss and offer suggestions for an exact site, the mobile lab and other logistics, and we hope that you will contact us as soon as possible to do so.

As always, thank you for your immediate consideration and attention. Once again, we look forward to hearing from you.


Sincerely,



Tom Reed
Member of Congress



Thomas O'Mara
New York State Senator



Philip Palmesano
New York State Assemblyman



Christopher Friend
New York State Assemblyman

Cc: Dr. Howard A. Zucker, Commissioner, NYS Department of Health